

Message Text

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ACTION EUR-12

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-04 H-02 INR-07 L-03

NSAE-00 NSC-05 PA-02 PRS-01 SP-02 SS-15 USIA-15

DOTE-00 COME-00 EB-07 LAB-04 SIL-01 /081 W

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R 040925Z FEB 76

FM AMCONSUL THESSALONIKI

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 2536

INFO AMEMBASSY ATHENS

UNCLAS THESSALONIKI 0052

E.O.11652:N/A

TAGS: ELAB, GR

SUBJECT: RISE IN BUS FARES PROMPTS LABOR UNREST IN THESSALONIKI

1. RECENT JUDICIAL DECISION TO ALLOW THESSALONIKI'S PRIVATELY OWNED BUS COMPANY TO RAISE BUS FARES 33 PERCENT (FROM 4-1/2 TO 6 DRACHMAS) HAS PROVOKED STRONG PUBLIC OUTCRY AND THREATENED LABOR UNREST.

2. IN EFFORT TO BACK FARE RISE, THESSALONIKI LABOR CENTER, WHICH ENCOMPASSES ALL SIGNIFICANT LABOR ORGANIZATIONS HERE, HAS CALLED FOR A GENERAL STRIKE FROM 7-11 A.M. THURSDAY, FEBRUARY 5 AND A NUMBER OF IMPORTANT MEMBER UNIONS ARE ALREADY COMMITTED TO PARTICIPATE. LABOR CENTER HAS ALSO CABLED STRONGLY WORDED PROTEST TO PRESIDENT OF REPUBLIC AND VARIOUS MINISTERS CRITICIZING GOVERNMENT FOR SIDING WITH INTERESTS OF A FEW AT THE EXPENSE OF THE WORKING CLASSES AND GENERAL PUBLIC. CABLE DEMANDS IMMEDIATE REPEAL OF FARE RISE. "OTHERWISE, ALL WORKING PEOPLE WILL HAVE TO ORGANIZE A STRUGGLE OF STRIKES WHICH WILL HAVE A SERIOUS EFFECT ON THE ECONOMIC LIFE OF THE COUNTRY."

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3. IN PARALLEL ACTION, VARIOUS MUNICIPALITIES
OF GREATER THESSALONIKI HAVE DECIDED TO CALL FOR
A MASSS RALLY IN THESSALONIKI AT 10 A.M. DAY OF STRIKE, IN PROTEST
AGAINST FARE RISE. IN ADDITION TO PROTESTING FARE
HIKE, RALLY WILL UNDOUBTEDLY ALSO BE USED TO PRESS
CENTRAL GOVERNMENT FURTHER FOR TRANSFER OF BUS
LINE FROM PRIVATE TO MUNICIPAL CONTROL, AN ISSUE
WHICH HAS BEEN IN THE FOREFRONT OF LOCAL ATTENTION
IN RECENT WEEKS. AMONG VARIOUS POLITICAL GROUPINGS,
PASOK (OF WHICH THESSALONIKI MAYOR IS A MEMBER)
APPEARS TO HAVE BEEN MOST ACTIVE IN PROMOTING THE
RALLY AND HAS BEEN OPENLY CIRCULATING LEAFLETS
DENOUNCING PRIVATE CITY BUS LINES AND CALLING FOR
THEIR TRANSFER TO MUNICIPAL CONTROL.
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